

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 10, 2015

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Jewell and Secretary Vilsack:

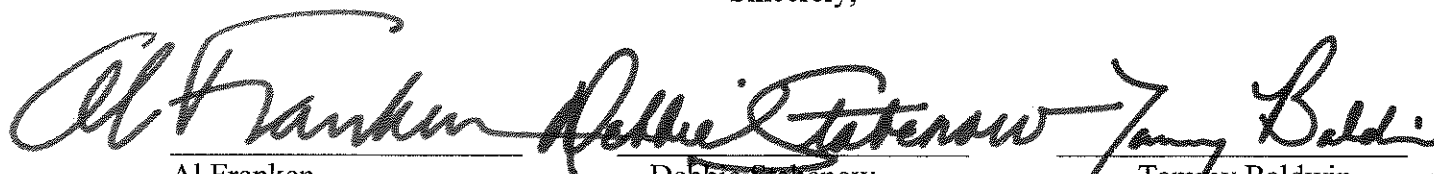
We are writing to urge you to take prompt action to fund programs that assist farmers and ranchers whose livestock are under threat from wolf predation. As you know, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is challenging the recent court decision that restored federal protections to the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes area. In the meantime, however, adequate resources must be deployed to 1) help farmers and ranchers prevent against future losses due to wolf predation; and 2) enhance wolf management programs in order to reduce future depredation.

Given that the court decision has left land owners with fewer options to protect their herds, federal programs to address the conflict between wildlife and livestock are particularly important. Specifically, we are concerned by the FWS decision to eliminate funding for the Wolf-Livestock Demonstration Project Grant Program in the FY2016 budget proposal. We urge you to prioritize ongoing funding for this program, which helps farmers and ranchers deploy preventative measures against wolf predation and can compensate them when losses do occur.

In addition to resources made available through the Department of Interior, the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) gray wolf management and technical assistance programs are important for landowners in our states who are not able to deploy traditional preventive measures at this time. Given the specific need for these programs following the court case, we urge the USDA to prioritize funding for wolf management and technical assistance programs for landowners who must prepare for the threat of wolf predation.

We urge you to take immediate action to restore and strengthen these programs in order to help our farmers and ranchers in need. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Al Franken
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator